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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP (JSAWYER), NEA/PPD (DBENZE, PAGNEW),
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SUBJECT: MISSION KUWAIT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE 34TH ANNUAL BOOK FAIR

11. (U) Summary: U.S. Embassy Kuwait participated in Kuwait's 34th annual book fair, held from October 28 to November 7, 2009 and attended by thousands of book lovers from across the socio-economic and political spectrums, including many groups of school children, from around the Gulf region. The Embassy booth provided IIP literature on American history, politics, society and values, biographies, as well as English language teaching and educational materials. The Ambassador attended the opening celebration as a guest of honor and accompanied the Minister of Information as he toured the exhibition hall. Virtually all media outlets reported on the Ambassador's attendance and U.S. participation. End Summary.

12. (U) In addition to the popular American titles translated into the Arabic language by the State Department's regional book offices based in Cairo and Amman, e-journals covering topics as diverse as Islam in America, higher education in the United States and American teenagers, were also on display in the stall and distributed free of charge. Bookmarks, pens, InfoUSA CD-ROMs, U.S. maps and IIP booklets on U.S. history and society were also complimentary. Representatives of AmidEast were at hand on an almost daily basis to answer questions related to study in the United States and State Department-sponsored educational and exchange programs such as ACCESS and YES. A total of 781 books, mostly non-fiction and biographies (President Obama's "Dreams from my Father" was a best-seller) were sold. We were able to answer questions on tourism, business and consular issues through an internet-connected laptop. Each weekday morning saw public school children and educators bused in from all of Kuwait's educational districts. These fieldtrips gave us the chance to interact with young people from religiously conservative and Bedouin backgrounds who normally have little exposure to this aspect of American culture.

13. (U) The Ambassador was invited as a guest of honor to the Inauguration Ceremony of the book fair, which took place in a ceremonial tent at the heart of the International Fair Grounds. Along with high-ranking officials from the Kuwaiti government and prominent figures of Kuwait's National Council for Culture, the Ambassador accompanied the Kuwaiti Minister of Information on a tour of the exhibition hall, trailed by dozens of media representatives. Virtually all media outlets featured the Ambassador's attendance and the U.S. Embassy's participation.

JONES